

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 05888 01 OF 02 081410 Z

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ACTION EA-13

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9824

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

CINCPAC

DAO TSN SGN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 5888

LIMDIS

EO: 11652 GDS

TAGS MOPS PINT PINS VS

SUBJ: GVN VIEWS ON ISSUES BEFORE THE TWO- PARTY JOINT MILITARY
COMMISSION

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: STATE 063076

1. SUMMARY: CONVERSATION APR 7 WITH COL DUONG HIEU
NGHIA, SENIOR STAFF OFFICER ON GVN DELEGATION TO TPJMC,
BROUGHT OUT CONSIDERABLE CLARIFICATION OF GVN THINKING ON
MEETINGS OF COMMANDERS OF OPPOSING ARMED FORCES, ORGAN-
IZATION OF TPJMC, POINTS OF ENTRY, AND PRISONER OF WAR
ISSUES. END SUMMARY

2. FURTHER DELINATION OF GVN THINKING ON SOME OF MAJOR ISSUES
BEFORE THE TWO- PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION (TPJMC)
EMERGED IN LUNCHEON CONVERSATION APR 7 WITH COL DUONG HIEU
NGHIA, GVN CHIEF ON MILITARY AFFAIRS SUB- COMMISSION. NGHIA,
FORMER VINH LONG PROVINCE CHIEF, IS WELL AND FAVORABLE KNOWN
TO EMBASSY.

3. MEETING OF COMMANDERS OF OPPOSING ARMED FORCES
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 05888 01 OF 02 081410 Z

IN DISCUSSION OF TONG LE CHAN ISSUE, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT GVN TAKES SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT VIEW OF IDENTITY OF QTE COMMANDERS OF THE OPPOSING ARMED FORCES END QTE REFERRED TO IN ART 4 OF PROTOCOL ON CEASEFIRE, THAN IS APPARENT IN REFTEL. NGHIA POINTED OUT THAT TERM QTE COMMANDERS END QTE MUST REFER TO THOSE WHO CAN GIVE EFFECTIVE ORDERS TO END CONFLICT AND ENSURE SUPPLY AND MEDICAL CARE. PRG, ON OTHER HAND, ACCORDING TO NGHIA, CONTINUES TO PRESS FOR MEETING OF QTE COMMANDERS END QTE IN NARROW SENSE AND ULTIMATELY WANTS TO PRESS ELSEWHERE FOR MEETINGS OF PLATOON AND EVEN SQUAD LEADERS WHO ARE NOT QTE COMMANDERS END QTE IN ANY SENSE. NGHIA DEVELOPED THIS POINT FURTHER, NOTING THAT AT TONG LE CHAN, FOR EXAMPLE, A MAJOR COMMANDS RANGER INFANTRY AND TWO 105 MM ARTILLERY PIECES WITHIN GARRISON WIRE. HOWEVER, HE DOES NOT COMMAND FOUR 155 MM ARTILLERY PIECES LOCATED SOUTH OF AN LOC WHICH ARE FIRING IN SUPPORT OF GARRISON. MAJOR ALSO DOES NOT COMMAND VNAF AIRCRAFT DROPPING SUPPLIES TO GARRISON AND, PROVIDING SUPPORT OF OUTPOST . THIS IS REASON GVN HAS PROPOSED SENDING IN SPECIAL TEAM TO SUPPORT GARRISON COMMANDER IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTHER SIDE, SINCE TEAM WILL HAVE POWER TO ISSUE NECESSARY ORDERS TO ALL CONCERNED ON GVN SIDE.

4. NGHIA SAID HE HAD ASKED PRG CHIEF ON MILITARY AFFAIRS SUB-COMMISSION WHETHER PRG COMMANDER ON SPOT CONTROLLED ARTILLERY AND ROCKETS BEING FIRED AT TONG LE CHAN OUTPOST. PRG COMMANDER ANSWERED HE DID NOT CONTROL ARTILLERY.

5. NGHIA ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS REITERATED IMPORTANCE OF TONG LE CHAN, NOT ONLY AS OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS ON OTHER ISSUES WITHIN TPJMC AND AS A MILITARY QUESTION OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO GVN, BUT ALSO AND MORE POSTIVELY, AS KEY TEST FOR TPJMC MACHINERY WHICH COULD PROVIDE VALUABLE WORKING PRECEDENTS FOR FUTURE QUESTIONS. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT HE AND BG PHAN HOA HIEP (DEPUTY CHIEF OF GVN DELEGATION TO TPJMC) HAD STRONGLY AND FOR TIME- BEING SUCCESSFULLY MADE MAJOR EFFORTS WITHIN GVN (HE MENTIONED REPRESENTATIONS MADE TO PRIME MINISTER KHIEM AND TO LTG DANG VAN QUANG) TO HEAD-OFF PROPOSALS FOR UNDERTAKING A MAJOR OPERATION IN RELIEF OF TONG LE CHAN. NGHIA EXPRESSED JUGEMENT THAT SUCH AN OPERATION WOULD HAVE REQUIRED TWO DIVISION, MIGHT NOT HAVE
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PAGE 03 SAIGON 05888 01 OF 02 081410 Z

BEEN SUCCESSFUL AND, REGARDLESS OF OUTCOME, COULD HAVE

DRASTICALLY REDUCED PROSPECTS FOR TPJMC.

6. ORGANIZATION - NGHIA SAID THAT THE GVN WANTS TO SEE TPJMC TEAMS OCCUPY ALL OF THE SEVEN REGIONAL SITES AND 26 TEAM SITES CONSTRUCTED OR ADAPTED FOR FPJMC USE. GVN ALSO WANTS TO HAVE TPJMC TEAMS AT ICCS TEAM SITES MENTIONED ART 4(D) OF PROTOCOL ON ICCS, SIX SITES NOMINATED BY BOTH SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES AS PORTS- OF- ENTRY FOR REPLACEMENT ARMAMENTS, MUNITIONS, AND WAR MATERIALS UNDER ART 7(A) OF THE PROTOCOL ON CEASEFIRE, AND FOUR ADDITIONAL MOBILE TEAMS. NGHIA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME DUPLICATION OF SITES INVOLVED AND INDICATED THAT THIS COULD BE WORKED OUT IN NEGOTIATIONS. THIS POINT HAS NOT BEEN CLARIFIED WITH THE PRG IN THE TPJMC CONTEXT, SINCE ALL ACTIVITY OF THE COMMISSION HAS BEEN DISTRACTED BY UNRESOLVED ISSUE OF CONTINUING COMMUNIST ATTACKS AT TONG LD CHAN. IN TERMS OF TIMING, NGHIA SAID THAT GVN WANTED TO SEE CENTRAL TPJMC ORGANIZED FIRST, WITH STRENGTH OF ABOUT 240 IN SAIGON AREA, WITH DEPLOYMENTS TO REGIONAL AND TEAM SITES COMING AFTERWARDS.

7. ICCS AND PORTS- OF- ENTRY - NGHIA BRIEFLY REVIEWED THE POE ISSUE, CONTRASTING RVN COOPERATION WITH ICCS WITH LACK OF SUCH COOPERATION ON PART OF PRG. HE NOTED THAT UNLIKE GVN, THE PRG HAS THUS FAR FAILED FORMALLY TO CONFIRM TO ICCS ITS CHOICE OF PORTS- OF- ENTRY FOR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT, ETC. EMBOFF SUGGESTED

THAT NGHIA URGE GVN DELEGATION TO TPJMC TO SEEK POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE FROM THIS DISCREPANCY BY

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DAND PRESSING PRG TO DO
LIKEWISE. NGHIA SEEMED INTRIGUED BY THIS I
PA# AND SAID HE
WOULD TAKE IT UP.

NOTE BY OCT: SAIGON 5888 # OMISSION.
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PAGE 04 SAIGON 05888 01 OF 02 081410 Z

CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 05888 02 OF 02 081359 Z

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ACTION EA-13

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 5888

LIMDIS

8. ZONES OF CONTROL - DUE TO TONG LE CHAN SITUATION, NGHIA SAID, NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON IDENTIFYING ZONES OF CONTROL. GVN APPROACH IS TO SEEK AGREEMENT ON LOCATION OF MAJOR UNITS OF GVN AND PRG FORCES, FOLLOWING WHICH ZONES OF CONTROL SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CLARIFY. PRG HAS SO FAR BEEN UNWILLING TO FOLLOW THIS LINE OF APPROACH.

9. COMMUNIST PERSONALITIES - CONTRARY TO VIEWS OF LTG THUAN (GVN CHIEF DELEGATION TO TPJMC), NGHIA SAID HE FELT LTG TRA (PRG CHIEF DELEGATE) REALLY WANTED TO MOVE AWAY FROM MILITARY STRUGGLE, A POINT WHICH, ACCORDING TO NGHIA, TRA HAS MADE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO HIM. NGHIA SAID THAT HE FELT TRA HAD BEEN INHIBITED BY PRESENCE OF MG LE QUANG HOA (DRV CHIEF DELEGATE TO FPJMC). NGHIA SAID HE FELT TRA' S DEPUTY IN TPJMC , MG HOANG ANH TUAN, IS A MAN OF LIMITED EXPERIENCE IN POLITICAL ARENA SINCE BULK OF HIS PAST ACTIVITY HAS BEEN AS SOLDIER. NGHIA SAID THAT TUAN IS FROM QUANG TRI PROVINCE.

10. PRISONER OF WAR ISSUES - NGHIA SAID THAT GVN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES HAVE CONCLUDED THAT DRV/ PRG ARE HOLDING ABOUT 15,000 ARVN POWS IN NORTH VIETNAM, LAOS AND CAMBODIA, AND THAT THESE MAY BE EXCHANGED ULTIMATELY FOR CIVILIAN DETAINEES (VCI) IN WHOM COMMUNISTS ARE SPECIALLY INTERESTED.
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 05888 02 OF 02 081359 Z

11. NGHIA SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH NORTHERN- SOUTHERN SPLIT IN ARVN IS ABOUT 50-50, ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF ARVN POWS RETURNED BY THE COMMUNISTS TO DATE HAVE BEEN SOUTHERNERS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT ALMOST ALL OF ARVN POWS RETURNED TO DATE WERE CAPTURED IN 1971 AND 1972, RATHER THAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS.

12. ORGANIZATION OF GVN DELEGATION TO TPJMC

GVN DELEGATION TO TPJMC CLARIFIED ITS INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AT MEETING AT TU DUC APR 2. IT IS NOW COMPOSED OF THREE QTE BLOCKS END QTE CHARGED RESPECTIVELY WITH PREPARATION OF POSITIONS FOR MEETINGS, OPERATIONS, AND CONTACTS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTIES (ICCS, PRG AND INTERESTED OTHER POWERS, SUCH AS US).
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